

Ministry of the Environment Water Resources Map 3106



Ground Water Probability

County of Elgin

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MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Water Quantity Management Branch

GROUND WATER PROBABILITY ELGIN COUNTY

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Although Elgin County borders Lake Erie and several communities obtain water from the lake, ground water is an important source of supply in much of the county.

The purpose of this publication is to indicate the probable water yield from wells, the probable depths to the water-yielding formations, areas where shallow wells and sand points may be developed, and the water quality at sampled locations in the County of Elgin.

Two maps are provided to show the ground water probability for the county: one shows the probable yields in deep and shallow water-yielding formations and the other the probable yields of formations at intermediate depths. Two small maps showing the bedrock geology and topography and the thickness of the overburden in the county are included.

The maps were compiled from nearly two thousand water-well records on file with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, oil and gas well data compiled by the Petroleum Resources Section of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and other miscellaneous water resources studies. Chemical quality data are presented for a number of wells which were selected to represent typical quality conditions in the most commonly used aguifers.

USE OF PROBABILITY MAPS

In evaluating prospective well sites both probability maps should be used to determine whether deep, intermediate or shallow aquifers (water-yielding formations) will meet the requirements of the proposed use.

Follow these steps:

- Locate the area of the proposed well site on map 3106-1 (Deep and shallow aquifers).
- Note the depth from ground level to the top of the deep aquifer; these are the blue contour lines at 25 ft. intervals.
- 3. Check the probable well yield by reference to the colour legend.
- To determine whether the deep aquifer is in the rock or overburden, compare the depth to the top of the aquifer with the thickness of overburden which is shown on Map 3106-4.
- Note the areas in which shallow aquifers are present; only the extent of shallow aquifers are shown. Yields and depths shown are for the deep aquifers.
- Check the likely water quality by locating nearby sampling points and checking analyses in the tables; for deep aquifers use tables 1 and 2 and for shallow aquifers use tables 3 and 4.
- 7. Repeat steps 1 to 3 for Map 3106-2 (Intermediate aguifers).
- Check the likely water quality by locating nearby sampling points and checking analyses in tables 5 and 6.
- Determine whether your needs will be met by investigating the deep, intermediate or shallow aquifer.

Probability Ranges

Yields are indicated in four ranges with comments on adequacy of each range:

less than 2 gpm-inadequate to marginal for most purposes.

2-10 gpm—marginal to adequate for domestic or stock purposes.

10-50 gpm—adequate for most commercial, small industrial and farming purposes.

greater than 50 gpm—adequate for most irrigative and many industrial and municipal uses.

An area was placed in a certain probability range if more than 50 per cent of the wells in that area had calculated yields within that range. A well drilled within an area of a particular range may not necessarily produce at a rate within that range, but there is a better than 50 per cent chance that it will. The ranges were determined from reported, short-term pumping tests and may not necessarily represent long-term yields. A more reliable determination of well and aquifer yields requires information from pumping tests and detailed hydrogeologic investigations.

The depth from land surface to the top of the deep and of the commonly used intermediate water-bearing formations is shown using 25-foot contours.

Map 3106-1 shows the yield, depths and water quality sampling points of aquifers in the upper part of the bedrock and in the deep overburden aquifers. Also indicated on the map are areas where surface sands or sand layers in the upper portion of the overburden are known to yield adequate water supplies for household purposes from sandpoints or bored wells. These areas are outlined by a dotted pattern which is superimposed over the deep aquifer probability ranges. The probable yields for these shallow sand aquifers are not indicated on the map, but water quality sampling points in the shallow aquifers are indicated.

The three cross-sections, along lines A₁-A₂, B₁-B₃ and C₁-C₃ show the major overburden materials, depths where water was found, static water levels, and depths to the bedrock where wells go that deep. They provide a general picture of the nature of the geologic deposits and the locations of water-yielding horizons beneath the land surface.

Map 3106-2 shows the probable yield, depths and water quality sampling points of intermediate aquifers in the overburden. In areas where there are more than one intermediate aquifer the most commonly used intermediate aquifer is depicted; other similar deposits may be present at greater or lesser depths.

The contours indicating the depth of the water-bearing formations are more accurate where the land surface is flat than in the valleys of the larger streams where the contours are approximate due to the rapid changes in ground elevation.

Water quality diagrams indicating the major chemical parameters are shown for those sampling points with the more comprehensive chemical analyses.

HYDROGEOLOGY

Geology

The bedrock underlying the county is composed of sedimentary rocks of three major formation units of Middle Devonian age. Map 3106-3 shows the bedrock geology and topography. The oldest rocks are brown, finely crystalline limestones containing some quartz sand grains and chert of the Dundee Formation. These rocks underlie the overburden in the north-central and northeastern parts of the county and occur locally in the Township of Aldborough and in the south-central area of the county.

In the southern and southeastern parts of the county the bedrock is composed of black bituminous shales with minor limestone content of the Marcellus Formation.

Grey shales with limestone beds form the bedrock in most parts of the Township of Aldborough and in the greater part of the Township of Dunwich. These rocks are part of the Hamilton Group of formations.

Most of the overburden is composed of glacial drift, mainly clays, clay tills, buried sand and gravel deposits, and extensive surface sand deposits. The thickness of overburden varies from about 50 feet in the valley of the Thames River to over 450 feet in the south-central part of Yarmouth Township (Map 3106-4). The common thickness is between 250 feet and 300 feet.

Geomorphologically the county can be divided into four regions. In the western part, the Bothwell sand plain dominates the topography, and in the southeastern part of the county, the flat area of the Norfolk sand plain comprises the land surface. Both sand plains are deltaic in origin and were deposited in glacial lakes Whittlesey (Norfolk sands) and Warren (Bothwell sands). Large areas in the townships of Dunwich, Southwold and Yarmouth are covered by the Ekfrid clay plain which was also deposited in glacial lakes. The topography of the northwestern region and parts of the central area of the county is dominated by the St. Thomas, Norwich and Tillsonburg moraines. These moraines were deposited by the receding ice sheet of the Wisconsinan glaciation. Local relief may be over 100 feet in places. Glacio-fluvial, spillway deposits of silt and some sand and gravel fill the valleys between the moraines in the Township of South Dorchester.

Occurrence of Water

The occurrence of ground water depends on the distribution of certain geologic units which can store and transmit water readily. Water-bearing formations which yield water in usable quantities are known as aquifers.

Aquifers in the area include the limestone and shale bedrock and most of the sands and gravels in the overburden.

A deep artesian aquifer is present in most parts of the county. It comprises the upper part of the bedrock and sands and gravels in the lower part of the overburden. Where the bedrock surface is not overlain by sands and gravels well yields are generally lower. Yields from the bedrock are lower in the western and southern parts of the county, where the bedrock

is composed mainly of shale. Higher yields are obtained generally in the northeastern part of the county and from deep sands and gravels west of Rodney.

Very often water from the deep aquifer contains hydrogen sulphide or excessive iron. Some wells which were fresh during drilling became sulphurous after intensive pumping.

The intermediate aquifers are generally artesian and occur at different depths in various areas of the county. They occur mainly in the westernmost, northern, central and eastern parts of the county. They consist of gravel, sandy gravel, and medium-to-fine-grained sand. Some deposits may have a large horizontal extent but changes in grain size may make the same deposit a good aquifer in one area and a poor one in another.

The shallow aquifers are generally unconfined, water-table aquifers. They are widespread in the sand plain areas of the western, south-central, southeastern and eastern parts of the county. Many dug, bored and driven wells are used for domestic water supplies. The depths of these wells rarely exceed 60 feet. In some areas the shallow aquifer may be partly confined due to changes in the nature of the deposits. Water in the shallow aquifers is very hard; generally harder than water in the deeper aquifers. Several shallow wells with high nitrate content indicate contamination from surface sources.

In general, ground water is available in adequate quantity and quality in most parts of the county. In some areas wells may be as deep as 300 feet. About 10 per cent of the wells drilled in the county were reported to be dry or to yield insufficient water.

Water Quality

The results of 86 water quality analyses in the laboratory and of 44 analyses in the field are listed in Tables 1 to 6. Tables 1 and 2 contain analyses of samples from deep aquifers, Tables 3 and 4 from shallow aquifers and Tables 5 and 6 from intermediate aquifers. The tables accompany the respective probability maps. The 44 field samples were analyzed for 6 parameters. The laboratory analyses are more comprehensive, 48 of them were done specifically for this report and 38 are from previous ground-water studies.

Scaled diagrams on the maps indicate the locations and the concentration of seven water quality parameters for 65 samples.

The quality of ground water is generally good in the county. The best quality is obtained from the intermediate aquifers. The deep aquifers sometimes yield water containing hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) and the shallow aquifers commonly yield very hard water.

The analyses for the wells in the deep, intermediate and shallow aquifers were compared and the results listed in the Table 7 below. Evident from the table are the high proportion of deep wells with high H₂S and iron and the high proportion of shallow wells with hard water. The pH values are relatively uniform for wells from all three types of aquifer.

Table 7. Comparison of Water Quality in Different Aquifers

		Wells	Wells tested for H ₂ S		Pe milli	Percentage of wells having concentration in parts per million in excess of the values shown for each parameter	wells having of the val	ng concent ues shown	concentration in parts per s shown for each paramete	arts per arameter	
Aquifer Type	pH at Lab	Number	Number	Iron as Fe	Boron as B	Sulphate as SO ₄	Chloride as Cl	Fluoride as F	Nitrate as N	Hardness as CaCO ₃	Total Dissolved Solids
			H ₂ S	0.3*	1.0	250*	250*	1.0**	10.01	180	200
Deep	7.2-8.6	34	21	98	29	0	34	61	0	42	54
mediate	7.5-8.4	34	60	66	00	00	0 10	65	0 26	33 91	0 44

value of permissible criteria for public water supplies

^{**} value of desirable criteria for public water supplies
*** value considered to be the lower limit of very hard water

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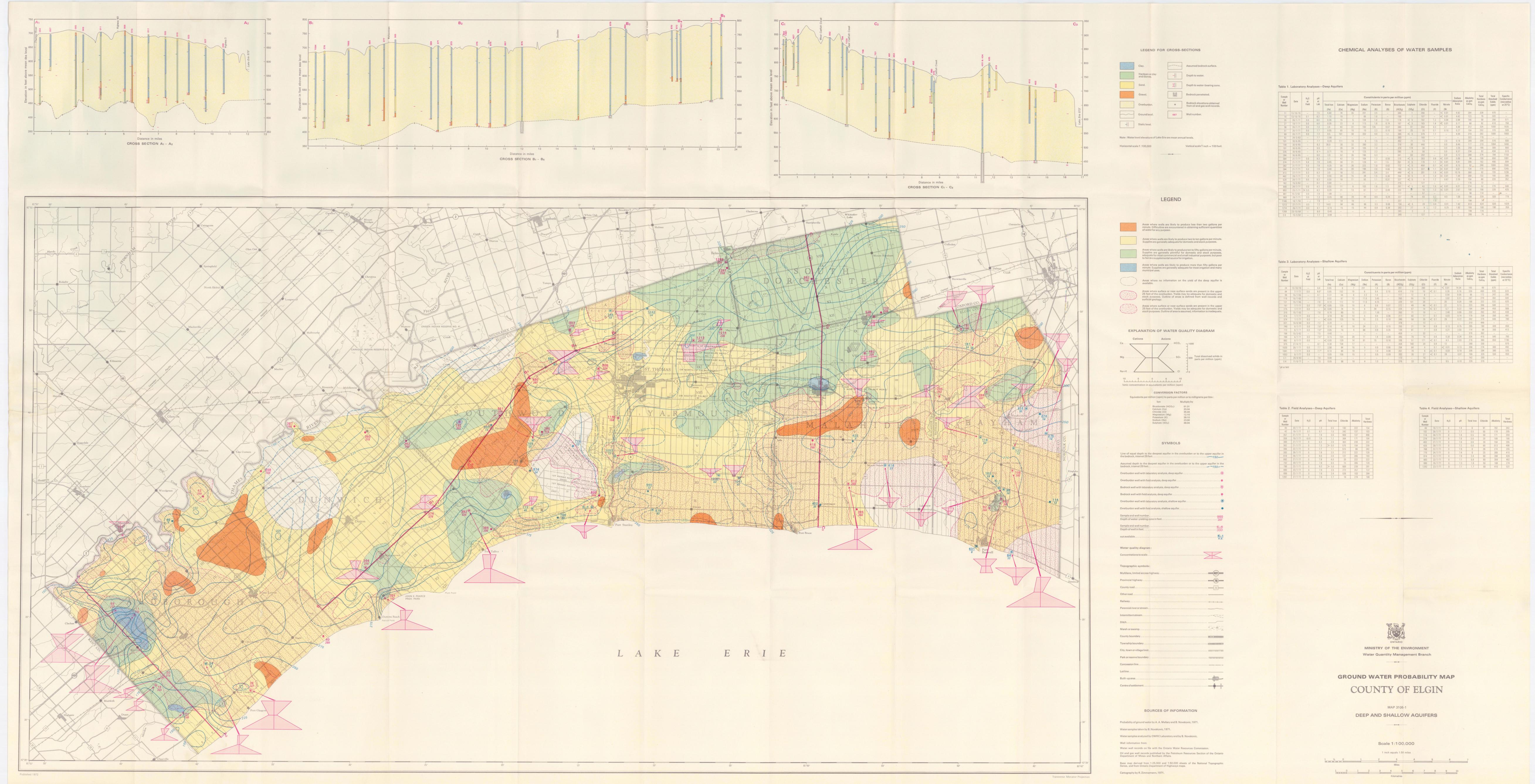
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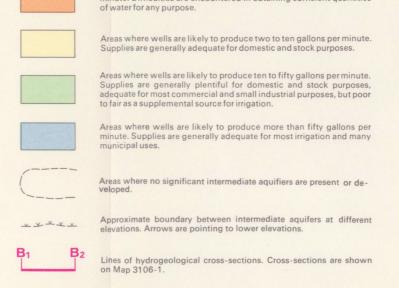
Sanford, B. V.

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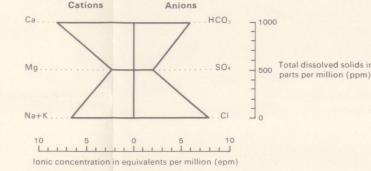
Sibul, U.

1969: Water resources of the Big Otter Creek drainage basin; Ontario Water Resources Commission, Water Resources Report 1.





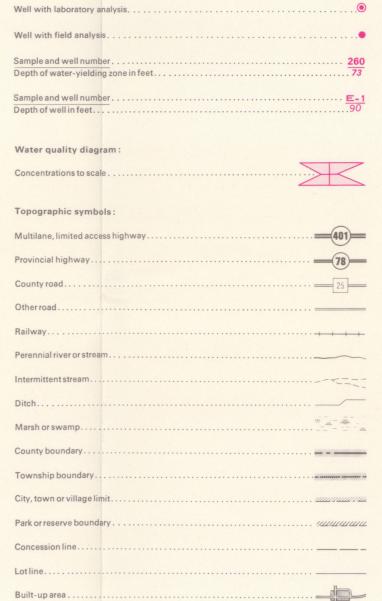
EXPLANATION OF WATER QUALITY DIAGRAM



CONVERSION FACTORS



SYMBOLS



SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Water samples taken by B. Novakovic, 1971. Water samples analyzed by OWRC Laboratory and by B. Novakovic. Well information from: Water-well records on file with the Ontario Water Resources Commission. Base map derived from 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 sheets of the National Topographic Series, and from Ontario Department of Highways maps.

CHEMICAL ANALYSES OF WATER SAMPLES

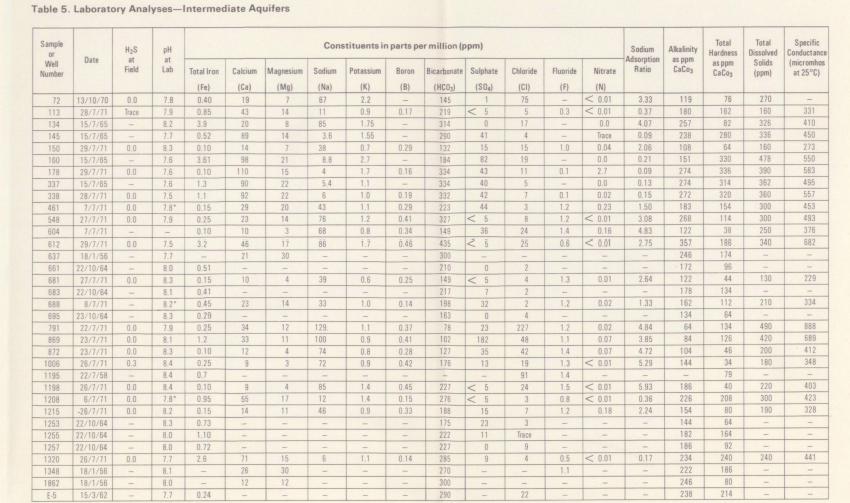


Table 6. Field Analyses—Intermediate Aquifers

or Well Number	Date	H ₂ S	рН	Total Iron	Chloride	Alkalinity	Total Hardness
202	29/7/71	0	8.0	0.5	50	154	68
216	29/7/71	0	7.7	1.6	25	222	325
319	29/7/71	0	6.7	0	21	137	102
328	29/7/71	0	7.7	0	25	291	342
486	29/7/71	0	8.1	2.3	15	273	154
516	29/7/71	0	7.7	> 5.0	15	376	308
750	23/7/71	0	8.5	0	30	171	51
827	24/7/71	0	7.7	1.4	90	154	205
830	23/7/71	0	8.4	1.2	60	120	86
998	26/7/71	0	7.8	1.6	151	154	103
1140	26/7/71	0	7.6	3.8	49	274	342
1180	26/7/71	0	7.9	1.2	45	188	137
1188	27/7/71	0	8.7	0.6	20	154	68
1197	26/7/71	Trace	8.6	1.3	51	222	120
1262	27/7/71	0	8.0	2.9	48	171	205
1291	26/7/71	0	7.7	3.0	15	239	274
1350	23/7/71	0	8.7	1.5	55	188	51



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GROUND WATER PROBABILITY MAP COUNTY OF ELGIN

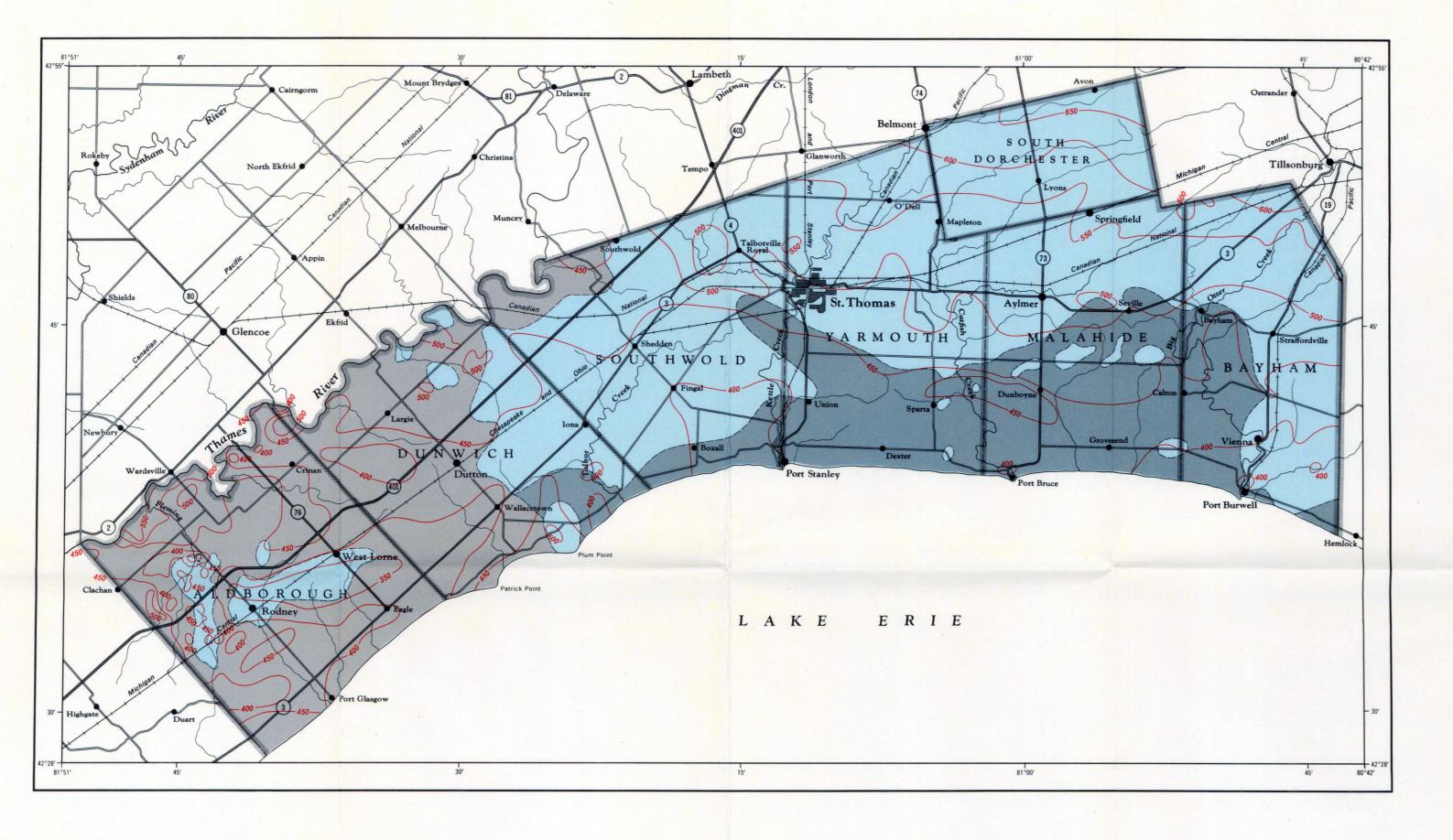
MAP 3106-2 INTERMEDIATE AQUIFERS

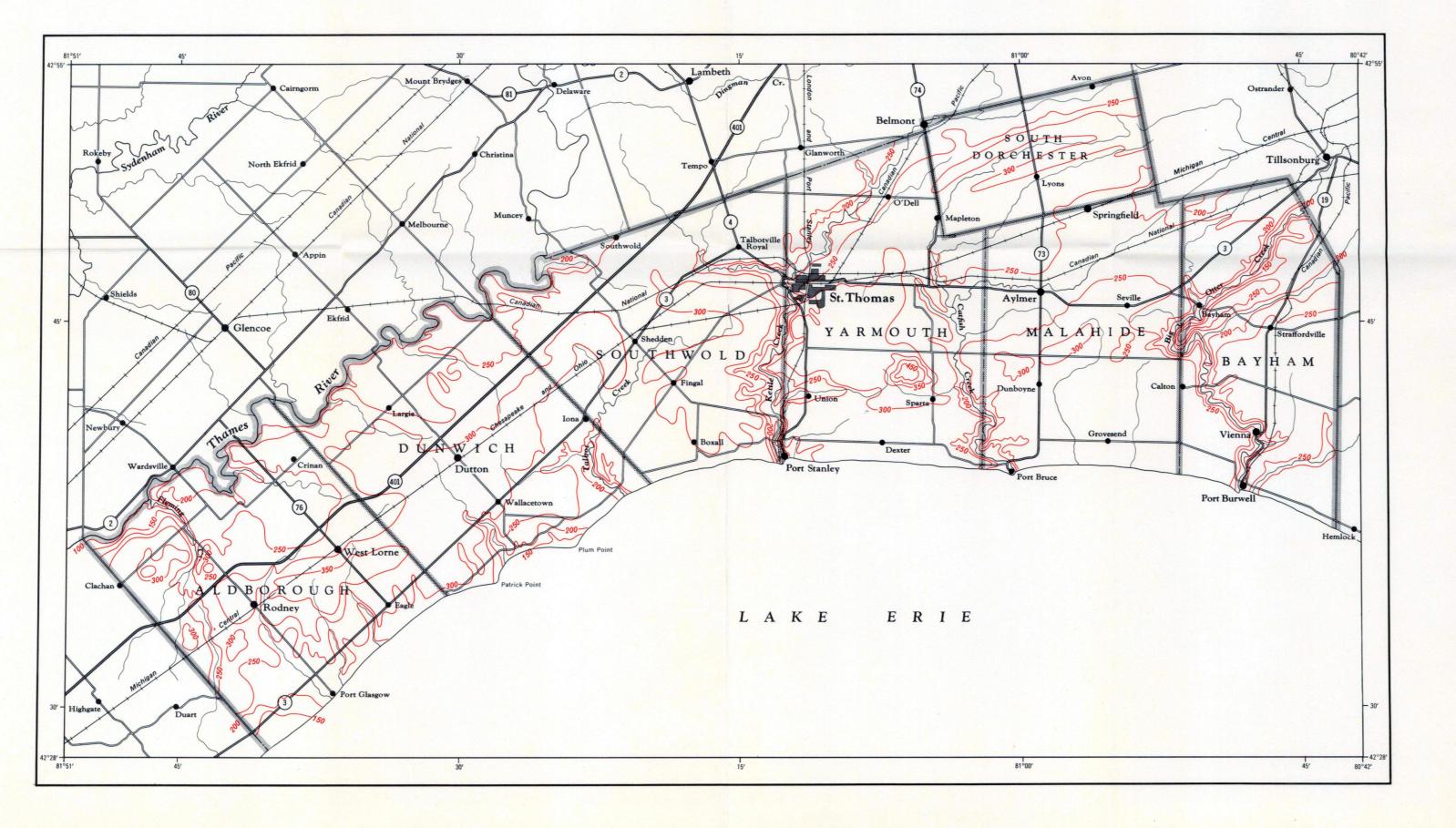
> Scale 1:100,000 1 inch equals 1.58 miles

1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HHHHH

Kilometres

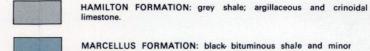




LEGEND

PALAEOZOIC

MIDDLE DEVONIAN



DUNDEE FORMATION: medium or light brown limestone.

Geological boundary, approximate.

Bedrock surface contour, interval 50 feet.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Bedrock topography by A. A. Mellary and B. Novakovic, 1972.

Map 1263A, Geology Toronto-Windsor Area, Ontario, by B. V. Sanford; Geological Survey of Canada, 1969.

Map 53-6, Elgin County and Parts of Middlesex County drift-thickness and bedrock contours, by B. V. Sanford; Geological Survey of Canada, 1953.

Base map derived from 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 sheets of the National Topographic Series, and from Ontario Department of Highways maps. Cartography by R. Zimmermann, 1972.

MAP 3106-3

BEDROCK GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

LEGEND



Line of equal overburden thickness, interval 50 feet.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Thickness of overburden by A. A. Mellary and B. Novakovic, 1972.

Map 53-6, Elgin County and Parts of Middlesex County drift-thickness and bedrock contours, by B. V. Sanford; Geological Survey of Canada, 1953.

Cartography by R. Zimmermann, 1972.

Water-well records on file with the Ontario Water Resources Commission.

Oil and gas well records published by the Petroleum Resources Section of the Ontario Department of Mines and Northern Affairs.

Base map derived from 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 sheets of the National Topographic Series, and from Ontario Department of Highways maps.

MAP 3106-4

THICKNESS OF OVERBURDEN



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COUNTY OF ELGIN

Scale 1:250,000

1 0 1 2 Kilometres